

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In this Amendment, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to more particularly claim Applicants' invention. Claim 1 now more particularly claims the structure of the total reflection/transmission type beam combining means. As now claimed in amended claim 1, the total reflection/transmission type beam combining means comprises a first triangular prism with a first inclined plane and a second triangular prism with a second inclined plane, wherein the first and second inclined planes face each other at a fixed distance. This feature is disclosed in Applicants' specification as published in the Patent Application Publication at least at para. 0016 and in Figure 2. Applicants respectfully submit that even if Lizotte or Sakamoto could be modified to include a total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, as argued by the Examiner for being disclosed in Hongo, the modified references still do not disclose the Applicants' invention as claimed in amended claim 1. As acknowledged by the Examiner, neither Lizotte nor Sakamoto disclose a total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, and Hongo, even if it discloses a total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, it does not disclose the total reflection/transmission type beam combining means as now more particularly claimed by Applicants. Therefore, for at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is patentable over the combinations argued by the Examiner.

In the Office Action, the Examiner points to Figures 1 and 9 of Hongo, the specification at columns 7 and 8, and specifically discusses a fly eye lens and a prism. However, Applicants respectfully submit that this disclosure of Hongo, and any other disclosure in Hongo, does not disclose the Applicants' claimed total reflection/transmission type beam combining means as now more particularly claimed in claim 1. Applicants respectfully request that if the Examiner disagrees with Applicants' arguments, that the Examiner particularly point out the disclosure in the references that the Examiner believes discloses Applicants' claimed invention.

In Applicants' invention as claimed, beams having the same polarization plane can be almost laid to overlap each other by use of the total reflection/transmission characteristic based on the incidental angles. Therefore, after the beam C is further split into two and micro-scanning is performed two-dimensionally with the two beam splits, the beam splits can be laid to overlap the beams A and B by the polarizing beam splitter. In such a manner, the four beams substantially laid to overlap one another can be made incident on the machining lens. Thus, four points can be machined concurrently. Furthermore, according to the claimed invention, three or more laser beams can be made incident on one machining lens. Thus, the machining efficiency can be improved. In addition, each laser beam enters a work perpendicularly thereto by a relay optical system. Thus, the machining accuracy is improved.


Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Lizotte, Sakamoto, nor Hongo, either alone or in combination, discloses all of the features of Applicants' invention as now claimed in claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is now in condition for allowance with claims 1-3 being allowable. If there are any questions regarding this Amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If required, this Paper should be considered as a Petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any such fee or any deficiency in fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket 029116.53329US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 13, 2006

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07/13/2006

Date